



MEETING MINUTES / 16 APRIL 2019

ATTENDANCE:

Present: Showell, Armbruster (call-in), Lardizzzone, Lopez, Magner, Sarg, Seppala (call-in) **46.6%**

Excused: Stewart, Baldwin, Bradley, Johnson, McMullen, Newman, Newstadt

Unexcused:

Guests: Vince Kane (Wilmington VAMC) (call-in), Bill Peterson (Delaware Veterans Home), Jessica Finan (Home of the Brave), Pat Cerchio (First State Military Women Warriors), Robin Hayes (Nutritionally Speaking)

CHAIRWOMAN'S OPENING REMARKS:

Acknowledged a lack of a quorum

Moment of silence for deployed personnel and those who have lost their lives

Acknowledged commissioners' participation with event honoring veterans and with legislative support

Acknowledged the newsletter's articles and informative data

Thanked commissioners for attending DCVA presentation before Joint Veterans Affairs Committee

New hire, Terry Hollinger, for the Delaware Veterans Home

- Commended Bill Peterson for his work at the home

MEETING MINUTES:

Post phoned due to a lack of a quorum

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:

Wilmington VAMC – Vince Kane, Director (telephone)

Acknowledged Bill Peterson's contributions and thanked him for his service

Solidifying the final award for the parking garage through work with vendors

- Once developer is announced, work will begin immediately

Dover clinic is in final stages of contract being awarded

- Expands veteran presence in lower Delaware

- Population models, eight to ten years, project increase in veterans within the Wilmington network

- Brings services closer to veterans

- Confirmed increase of 600 new veterans at Georgetown clinic

29 Apr: Senator Carper's Veterans Summit featuring VA Secretary

Partnering with University of Delaware to improve quality of care and veterans' experience

- University has program through Learner School of Business used to train staff on veterans' experience

- - First class graduated earlier this month

- - Two cohorts are now in session

- - Two more cohorts are projected

- - Includes clinical and administrative staff

Having conversations with Christiana Health System on behavioral health issues

- Goal is for statewide initiative to address veteran suicide

- - Seeking support from governor along the lines of a Governor's Challenge

- - Reviewing training and campaign initiatives

Trying to make changes on how care is offered

- Concerned about quality indicators, seeking improvements
- Ties into preparation for mission act implementation
- Identifying new leaders to address quality of care

(Farley) What is your response to the President's executive order involving federal agencies on veteran suicide prevention?

Nothing specific beyond projected statewide engagement, but emphasized growth in behavioral health staff to address local concerns, and confirmed no formal actions

Seeking commission's assistance with marketing and promoting this initiative

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Bill Peterson, Director:

Acknowledged as last meeting

Residents – 68

Bell unveiling date has been moved to 6 May to de-conflict with Veterans Summit

Dining room project is proceeding outside structure and walls are complete

- Partnered with SoDel concepts, restaurant group, to manage customer service and meal delivery
 - - Encourages a positive meal engagement

Blue wing bathing suite is projected to open in June

- Will begin occupancy in August

Gold wing dementia suite is filling fast

Meeting with Medicaid Director to convince State of Delaware that they should pay portion of dental services for veteran who only have Medicaid

- Will mention this need and other dental care needs during Veterans Summit

Terry Hollinger selected as next home director

- B.S. in Nursing and MBA
- Is not a veteran, difficult to find veterans with nursing home licensure
- Begins 22 April

Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:

Male facility is full

Female facility has two beds available

Doing well with VA inspections

Funding is secure

- Still maintaining grant per diem for male facility which funds all 15 beds
- Still maintaining VA contract beds at female facility but only funds two beds
 - - Renewed for another two years
- Received grant and aid monies, \$10K for next fiscal year
 - - Used to pay for utilities

Mobile outreach RV van is getting wrapped with camo graphics

- Will work as mobile outreach office with laptops and cell phones

(Showell) How are remaining six female beds paid for?

Through foundation grants and fundraising

(Sarg) Are any children at the facility?

No

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Robin Hayes, Nutritionally Speaking

Registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator

Agency has been in Delaware for 25 years

Mission is to help people not require a lot of medication but to use food for treatments

First dietary agency with Tricare contract

- Unfortunately Tricare contract was severed without an explanation
- Continue to receive referrals
- Dover AFB hired to dieticians for their population
- Still desire to work with Tricare

Humana Military East oversees local Tricare programs

- Not providing fair and equitable contracts to providers
 - - Benefits are limited or denied to eligible members
 - - Claiming 30% of allowable reimbursement rates to market various services
 - - Prohibits small private practices from signing contracts
 - - Asked Humana how the 30% is being utilized in marketing and they have no explanation
 - - Gives impression of “pay to play” contract meaning we must pay them to provide services

Requests State of Delaware laws to address this issue

SB 199 was passed last year establishing minimum reimbursement rate that follows Medicare’s guidelines

- Sets Medicare’s rates as a baseline for primary care reimbursement

Tricare is based on Medicare guidelines and believe Humana doesn’t comply

Humana’s proposed contracts request private practices take 30% less and this is not feasible

Don’t believe nutrition and dietary are only services impacted

(Farley) Does Humana/Tricare refer veterans to your agency?

No our referrals come from civilian sources because Humana wants 30% of fees to provide referrals

Humana claims rate fee comes from DoD but unable to receive a point of contact

Not being under contract means patients have to pay out of pocket

So the focus is finding out why providers have to pay 30%

Was told SB 199 doesn’t apply to federal laws but believes Dover AFB would consider it

Spoke to Senator Carper’s team and received a response letter

(Farley) Would like copy of the response to present this concern during the Veterans Summit

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Armbruster:

Interments – 75 (+12)

Administrator Cooke is still on medical leave

Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:

Interments – 24 (-7)

Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:

Attended Employment First Oversight meeting

- Provided handout referencing tax credit for hiring individuals with disabilities

Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen:

Reported by Sarg

Attended DCVA presentation during Joint Veterans Affairs Committee

- Presented by Director Kirby
- Representative Briggs-King showed interested in income tax exemption for military retiree pay
- Representative Chukwuocha is leading property tax exemption for 100% disability compensated veterans
- Received various questions on Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) database
 - - Individuals would be coded having TBI and not identified by name
- Discussed veteran home’s dental suite funding through Secretary of State and via bond bill

(Farley) Did they discuss HB 90 trust fund?

The bill is on the Senate side awaiting a vote and the fund is to receive \$100K annually from the general fund

(Farley) Concerned because the income stream is not listed in the bill's language

(Showell) Was there negative feedback from Veterans Service Organizations about change to General Discharge (Under Honorable Conditions?)

Only from MOAA's Dover Chapter President, with other questions coming from House Veterans Affairs Committee members (Kirby provided a talking point paper explaining the discharge)

(Lopez) Upgrading discharges are a difficult and lengthy process so that's not a good option for general discharged veterans

(Farley) Discharge codes provide insight on reasons for discharge

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

DVTF Previous Month: Applications 11; Granted 7 (63.3%); Awarded \$9,110.28; Balance - \$54,100.00

Our Community Salutes (Enlistee Recognition) is an outstanding way to support young people dedicated to serving our nation – date/time are listed under events

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:

Commissioner McMullen (Air Force Sergeants Association - AFSA)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Armbruster (American Legion - AL)

Attended Youth Leadership Conference for JROTC students at Delaware Military Museum

- Discussed Oratorical and Boys/Girls State Programs

Attended Veteran John Houck's 100th birthday celebration at DelVets Post 1

- Presented Appreciation Certificate and letter from the Director

Boys State members attended county days in Sussex, Kent, and New Castle counties

5 – 7 Apr: Attended National Oratorical Program and the winner was from Iowa

19 – 20 Jul: State Convention at Dover Downs

- National Commander Candidate is James Oxford from North Carolina

Commissioner Bradley (American Veterans - AmVets)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Lardizzone (Disabled American Veterans - DAV)

25 Mar: Attended Delaware Veterans' Home Admissions Meeting

5 – 6 Apr: Harvest Ridge Food Truck Fundraiser raised fund for service dogs' purchase

- Dogs cost \$10K

10 Apr: Attended Joint Veterans Affairs Committee meeting

16 – 19 Apr: Mobile Service Officers helped file claims at the following locations

- Delaware Tech Terry Campus

- AmVets Post 2

- Delaware Tech Owens Campus

- Departmental Headquarters

25 Apr: Attending Friends of Veterans Home meeting

- Chapter will be able to contribute monies to dental suite

26 Apr: Attending Bill Peterson's retirement dinner

28 Apr: Attending DAV New York's anniversary dinner

29 Apr: Attending Senator Carper's Veterans Summit

Commissioner Johnson (Korean War Veterans Association - KWVA)

25 Jun: Start of war commemoration at the Korean War Memorial (Washington, DC)

23 Jul: Maryland honors and welcomes Korean War Veterans (Annapolis)

Members attended Dover AFB Ruck March provided comments and received donations

Chapter 1

- Successful pancake fundraiser assisting Cape Henlopen JROTC

- Planning Rose of Sharon fundraiser

Chapter 2

- Rose of Sharon fundraiser every weekend, seven members participated

Commissioner Farley (Marine Corps League - MCL)

29 Mar: Attended Sussex Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony

30 Mar: Attended Kent Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony, laid DCVA wreath

Toys for Tots results

- 4.4M toys distributed to over one million children

- Expenditures Program 96.7%, Fundraising 2.8%, Overhead 0.5%

Commissioner Sarg (Military Officers Association of America - MOAA)

30 Mar: Attended Kent Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony

3 Apr: Attended 55+ Expo at Dover Downs

9 Apr: Attended Employment First Oversight Commission meeting

10 Apr: MOAA National and Departmental stormed the hill in Washington, DC

- Focused on widow's tax

- 3.1% military pay raise

- Healthcare costs of military retirees, only 4% difference between what they pay and what civilians pay

10 Apr: Attended DCVA's legislative recommendations and concerns presentation before the Joint Veterans Affairs Committee

12 Apr: Attended Veterans Watchmaker Initiative Graduation ceremony

Commissioner Magner (Military Order of the Purple Heart - MOPH)

11 Mar: Department made \$1,500.00 donation to Friends of Delaware Veterans

10 Apr: Attended National Museum of the Marine Corps trip

3 May: Department will participate at VA Patient Carnival

- Providing packs containing literature and items for daily living

25 May / 1100: Departmental Convention at Mission BBQ, Dover

- Commander Gary "MO" Morris will be sworn in as 2019 – 20 commander

8 – 12 Jul: National Convention, Branson MO

Commissioner Newman (Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Baldwin (Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA)

16 Mar: Formally established \$25K trust fund endowment fund

- Specific information to follow

Working with Superintendent, Sussex County on military school initiative

18 Apr: Meeting with high school student veterans' support group on organizing annual fund raising for endowment

25 Apr: Raising monies, for endowment, at Delaware Decision Makers luncheon

4 May: Setting up booth at Dover Days to advertise endowment fund

9 May: Address Dover Rotary Club

17 May: Keynote speaker DELMARVA Boy Scout Council's God and Country breakfast

24 – 27 May: Rolling Thunder Fleet Reserve Booth in Washington DC

Commissioner Showell (At Large, affiliated with Delaware National Guard)

When General Timmons took command the commission asked to meet with her, does the commission wish to meet with General Berry?

Commissioner Newstadt (At Large, affiliated with Jewish War Veterans)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Seppala (At Large, affiliated with Military Order of World Wars)

MOWW, Wilmington Chapter reelected Carl Witte chapter commander

23 Mar: Youth Leadership Conference featured Commissioner Baldwin as an instructor

- MOWW and Delaware Military History and Education Foundation sponsors

- Three JROTC cadets, each, from seven high schools

- Delaware Civil Air Patrol members will also be in attendance

28 – 31 Mar: Sponsored two cadets to attend Spirit of American youth leadership conference

Preparing to present JROTC awards at 18 high schools and ROTC award to University of Delaware
National Command-in-Chief visits Delaware in June

Commissioner Lopez (At Large, affiliated with Delaware Veterans)

25 Mar: Attended Military Women's Tea meeting

- Chair Showell was guest speaker

- Ann Russell 92 year old World War II veteran

- Lt. Governor Hall-Long stopped by

28 Mar: Attended Veterans Stand Down meeting, serving as registration lead

29 Mar: Set-up and emceed Military Women's Tea, 100 in attendance

1 Apr: Served as By-Laws Chair for DelVets Post 2 By-Laws meeting

3 Apr: DelVets Post 1 celebrated lifetime member, World War II veteran John Houck's 100th birthday

- Commissioner Armbruster presented DCVA certificate

5 Apr: Attended DAV fundraiser at Harvest Ridge

10 Apr: Served on Mobility in Action Team meeting, conducted brain storming to determine transportation barriers and issues affecting seniors, low-income, disabled, and veterans

13 Apr: Attended Convoy of Hope Committee meeting as veteran services lead

Commissioner Stewart (At Large, affiliated with student veterans associations)

24 Apr / 1200 – 1600: Law Enforcement Appreciation Luncheon, Camden-Wyoming Fire Hall

TERM COMPLETION:

EVENTS:

18 April / 0830: DJF Meeting, Adams Service Center, Georgetown
23 April / 1730: Friends of Delaware Veterans Meeting, DCVA Conference Room
26 April / 1800: Bill Peterson's Retirement Dinner, Duncan Center, Dover
29 April / 0900: Senator Carper's Veterans Summit, Wilmington VAMC, Building 5
6 May / 1100: Bell Reveal, Delaware Veterans Home, Milford
9 May / 1030: Modern Maturity Center Table Display, Modern Maturity Center, Dover
16 May / 0830: DJF Meeting, DNG Biden Center, New Castle
24 May / 1300: World War II Veterans Recognition, Brandywine State Park, Wilmington
25 May / 1030: Memorial Day Recognition, Bear Veterans Cemetery, Bear
29 May / 1830: Our Community Salutes (Enlistee Recognition), Cavaliers Country Club, Bear
30 May / 1030: Memorial Day Recognition, War Memorial Park, New Castle

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**NEW BUSINESS:**

(Lopez) DelVets Post 1 requests to host commission meeting
- Working to coordinate date

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:**CLOSED SESSION:****NEXT MEETING:****LOCATION:**

Tuesday, 21 May 2019 at 10:00 AM
Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs